

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
351 North Mountain View Avenue, Third Floor ♦ San Bernardino, CA 92415-0010
(909) 387-9146 ♦ Fax (909) 387-6228



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

MARGARET D. SMITH
Interim Public Health Director

PAULA MEARES-CONRAD
Interim Assistant Director of Public Health

MARGARET M. BEED, MD
Health Officer

Contact: Margaret M. Beed, MD
Health Officer
(909) 387-6219

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY REPORTS FIRST HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS CASE IN THE COUNTY

SAN BERNARDINO – San Bernardino County has confirmed its first human West Nile Virus case for 2007. Fortunately, the individual is currently recovering from their illness. The total number of human cases in California to date is 108, with 5 deaths.

San Bernardino County Health Officer, Margaret M. Beed, M.D., said, “It is not surprising that we have had our first case given the West Nile Virus activity in local birds and mosquitoes. However, West Nile Virus can be prevented.”

To prevent further cases of WNV, the Department of Public Health encourages people to take these precautions seriously:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.
- When outdoors, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Apply mosquito repellent with DEET according to label instructions. Products with at least 25% DEET will provide adequate protection under most conditions. For children over the age of two months, products with 10% DEET is effective.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property that can support mosquito breeding. Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

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West Nile Virus is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Human-to-human transmission of WNV is limited to unusual situations such as blood transfusions and organ transplantation. Blood banks have developed extensive screening tests of specimens for evidence of WNV. West Nile Virus is not directly transmitted from birds to humans, although the public is advised to not handle dead or dying birds.

Most individuals who are infected with WNV do not experience any illness. Only 20% of infections have mild symptoms, such as fever, rash, headaches and body aches. Less than one percent of WNV infections will become severe. Death from WNV is uncommon, although seniors and individuals with impaired immune systems have a greater chance of dying from WNV infection. The public is advised to see their medical provider if they develop symptoms that could be from WNV.

Areas of standing water, including stagnant pools or ponds, old tires, buckets and even leaky sprinklers, can be a breeding area for mosquitoes. The public may report areas of standing water to the San Bernardino County Vector Control Program at **800-44-ABATE (800-442-2283)**.

If you live in Chino, Chino Hills, Ontario or Rancho Cucamonga, contact the West Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District at (909) 635-0307. For more information about WNV or to report dead birds, visit the California Department of Health Services website at www.westnile.ca.gov.

Since horses are susceptible to WNV and a vaccine is available for horses, horse owners are advised to contact their veterinarians about timely vaccinations. Sick or dead horses should be evaluated for evidence of WNV infection.

Additional information about prevention of WNV infections and surveillance data is available from the San Bernardino County website at www.sbcounty.gov/dehs/VECTORCONTROL. For questions about WNV illness or for physicians to report a case, please call the Epidemiology Program at (909) 383-3050.

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